

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9129

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 AMMAN 4941

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FOR THE SECRETARY FROM CHARGE

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR US LE JO

SUBJECT: LEBANONESE DEVELOPMENTS:DISCUSSION WITH KING HUSSEIN

REF: STATE 234220

1. SUMMARY: CHARGE DELIVERED ORAL MESSAGE FROM SECRETARY TO KING HUSSEIN AS INSTRUCTED. KING HUSSEIN WHILE HE HAD BEEN OUT OF TOUCH WITH IMMEDIATE AREA DEVELOPMENTS SAID HE PERFECTLY UNDERSTOOD FROM JORDANS 1970 EXPERIENCE WITH PLO WHY CHRISTIAN LEBANESE WANTED TO HOLD ONTO MILITARY GAINS AND WHY CHRISTIAN LEBANESE CANNOT ACCEPT RETURN TO STATUS QUO ON PALESTINIAN ROLE. HIS BIAS POINT HERE WAS PALESTINIAN LEADERSHIP MUST BE CHANGED AND GUERILLA TERRORIST CHARACTER ALTERED. HE AGREED ON NEED TO STRONGLY BACK SARKIS BUT HE HAD NO CONCRETE IDEAS BEYOND CONTINUING TO BACK SYRIANS. KING HAD JUST TALKED TO ASAD. KING HOPES ARAB MINI SUMMIT INITIALLY PLANNED FOR SEPT 23 WILL PROBABLY COME OFF WITHIN NEXT FEW DAYS IF AS HE HOPES EGYPTIANS DROP REQUIREMENT FOR PLO AND LEBANESE ATTENDANCE FROM BEGINNING. JORDAN IS NOT INSISTING ON ATTENDING BECAUSE TO DO SO WOULD LET EGYPT DRIVE WEDGE BETWEEN SYRIA AND JORDAN AND SYRIA SHARES JORDANS VIEWS ON LEBANON ANYWAY. SUBSEQUENTLY FULL ARAB SUMMIT WOULD BE USEFUL TO INCLUDE ALL PARTICIPANTS IN LEBANESE SETTLEMENT. IF ASAD SADAT MINI SUMMIT DOES NOT

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OCCUR OR IS UNSUCCESSFUL KING HUSSEIN THINKS SYRIANS WILL

THEN FEEL COMPELLED TO MOVE MILITARILY A MOVE HUSSEIN THINKS WOULD
RESULT AT THIS LATE DATE IN STALEMATE KING
HUSSEIN BROUGHT UP IRAQI PROVOCATIONS
TOWARD KUWAIT AND ON JORDAN BORDER AND SAID
IRAQ'S NEIGHBORS WOULD ONLY BE ABLE TO MAKE IRAQ BEHAVE
AFTER IMMEDIATE LEBANESE PROBLEM DEALT WITH.
END SUMMARY

2. KING HUSSEIN RECEIVED ME AFTERNOON SEPT 22 ALONE
AT HIS RESIDENCE. I THANKED HIM FOR RECEIVING ME SO
SOON ON HIS RETURN TO JORDAN IN VIEW OF HIS BUSY
SCHEDULE AND APPROACHING ID AL FITR HOLIDAY.

3. I MENTIONED THAT I HAD ORAL MESSAGE TO CONVEY FROM
SECRETARY ON LEBANESE DEVELOPMENTS. I THEN DELIVERED
SLOW BUT VIRTUALLY VERBATIM ORAL PRESENTATION OF POINTS
IN REFTTEL. FOLLOWING PRESENTATION I ASKED KING IF HE
WISHED ME TO CLARIFY ANY POINTS AND HE SAID NO. I
LEFT NOTHING WRITTEN WITH HIM.

4. IN RESPONSE KING SAID TO CONVEY HIS WARM REGARDS TO
SECRETARY AND THAT HE APPRECIATED SECRETARY'S
MESSAGE, HIS PARTY HAD TRIED TO MAKE CONTACT WITH THE SECRETARY
IN LONDON TO DISCUSS LEBANESE AND OTHER GENERAL MATTERS
BUT REGRETTED THAT THIS HAD NOT BEEN POSSIBLE. KING SAID
HE HAS BEEN OUT OF TOUCH WITH AREA DEVELOPMENTS BUT HAD
SOME IMPRESSIONS TO CONVEY. KING MADE FOLLOWING POINTS

5. KING COULD UNDERSTAND CHRISTIAN POSITION OF WISHING
TO HOLD ONTO MILITARY GAINS AS A DEGREE OF SECURITY
AGAINST FUTURE UNCERTAINTIES. WITH JORDAN'S 1970
EXPERIENCE WITH PALESTINIANS AS A GUIDE, HE ALSO UNDER
STOOD IT IMPOSSIBLE TO ACCEPT RETURN TO STATUS QUO ANTE
SITUATION AFTER HAVING LOST MANY LIVES TO PREVENT THEIR
COUNTRY FROM BEING TAKEN OVER BY THEM.

6. KING SAID HE TOO HOPED SARKIS COULD RECEIVE ALL
POSSIBLE BACKING? BECAUSE IF NO PROGRESS IS MADE SOON
AFTER SARKIS INAUGURATION, LEBANESE AND AREA SITUATION
WILL RAPIDLY DETERIORATE DUE TO LACK OF HOPE AND CLARITY.

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7. ON PLENARY ARAB SUMMIT IN OCTOBER KING SAID ALL
ARAB STATES HAVE AGREED TO THIS IN PRINCIPLE BUT ASAD
SADAT MINI SUMMIT IS KEY CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS. KING SAID
HE WAS JUST ON PHONE TO PRESIDENT ASAD, AND IT APPEARS
THAT THERE ARE STILL SOME UNRESOLVED POINTS CONCERNING
INITIAL PLAN FOR SEPT 23 MINI SUMMIT BETWEEN ASAD
AND SADAT IN SAUDI ARABIA WITH SAUDI ARABIA AND KUWAIT

THEN COMING IN ALMOST IMMEDIATELY. BASICALLY EGYPT IS INSISTING ON INCLUDING PALESTINIAN AND LEBANESE PARTICIPANTS INITIALLY ALTHOUGH KING THOUGHT EGYPTIANS WOULD PROBABLY RELENT ON THIS POINT AND ASAD SADAT SUMMIT COULD GO FORWARD WITH PERHAPS ONLY A FEW DAYS DELAY. HE DID NOT THINK ID AL FITR HOLIDAYS WOULD ALLOW INTERFERENCE WITH TIMETABLE NOR DID HE THINK SYRIA WOULD MOVE MILITARILY IN LEBANON BEFORE MINI SUMMIT ISSUES RESOLVED.

8. JORDAN WOULD NOT GO TO MINI SUMMIT INITIALLY BUT WOULD JOINT AT LATER STAGE AS HE THOUGHT PLO AND LEBANESE

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9130

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FOR THE SECRETARY FROM CHARGE

WOULD. CONTRARY TO SOME (READ CROWN PRINCE HASSAN) HANDLING OF ISSUE DURING HIS ABSENCE, KING DID NOT INSIST ON BEING INCLUDED INITIALLY: SYRIA SHARES JORDANS VIEWS ON LEBANON ANYWAY AND KING IS NOT ABOUT TO LET EGYPT "DRIVE A WEDGE" BETWEEN JORDAN AND SYRIA. KING HAD JUST ASSURED ASAD ON THAT POINT. KING ADDED THAT ASAD WAS INITIALLY DUE TO TRANSIT JORDAN TOMORROW SEPT 23 ENROUTE TO MINI SUMMIT BUT HIS TRIP DELAYED UNTIL QUESTION OF PARTICIPANTS IS RESOLVED.

9. KING SAID HE WOULD BE UNHAPPY TO SEE MINI SUMMIT NOT OCCUR BECAUSE IT COULD BE POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT. BUT HE ALSO SEES MERIT IN HOLDING LATER GENERAL ARAB SUMMIT: HE FEARS THAT LEBANESE PROBLEM CANNOT BE RESOLVED IF SOME PARTICIPANTS IN LEBANON LIKE ALGERIA

AND LIBYA ARE EXCLUDED AND THAT PLENARY ARAB SUMMIT SHOULD PROPERLY TAKE RESPONSIBILITY TO SETTLE THE ISSUE.

10. KING REITERATED HIS ASSESSEMENT THAT NO ONE CAN COME OUT ON TOP MILITARILY IN LEBANON MAYBE SYRIANS COULD HAVE DONE SO WITH ACCEPTABLE LOSSES SOME MONTHS AGO BUT NOT NOW. KING HAS LOOKED AT THE MAPS WITH THE SYRIANS AND HE CONCLUDES IT WOULD BE A VIRTUAL STALEMATE. THERE IS HOWEVER EVIDENCE THAT LEBANESE MUSLIMS ARE UPSET WITH PLO AND WITH COMMUNISTS
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AND THIS IS HEALTHY POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT. ALSO AS KING HAS MENTIONED PREVIOUSLY SYRIANS WERE ALSO SURPRISED THAT SOVIETS WERE SWITCHING THEIR SUPPORT TO LEBANESE COMMUNISTS AS LEBANESE NEGOTIATORS(PRESUMABLY INSTEAD OF JUMBLATT)

11. KING THOUGHT POSITIVE EGYPTIANS SYRIAN MEETING WOULD HELP SARKIS IN SHORT TERM. CONVERSELY IF ASAD SADAT MEETING DOES NOT OCCUR OR IS UNSUCCESSFUL KING THOUGHT SYRIANS THEN WOULD FEEL COMPELLED TO DO SOMETHING MILITARILY ON THE GROUND IN LEBANON. FOR PERMANENT SOLUTION THE LEBANESE WILL NEED HELP TO REBUILD THEIR ARMY.

12. I PROBED KING ON POINT IN REFTTEL ABOUT CHRISTIANS PREOCCUPATIONS OVER ROLE OF PALESTINIANS AND DESIRE NOT TO RETURN TO STATUS QUO ANTE. KING BASIC POINT WAS THAT PALESTINIAN LEADERSHIP MUST BE RECONSTITUTED AND THE GUERRILLA AND TERRORIST CONCEPT MUST DISAPPEAR. KING SAID HE AND ASAD AGREE ON THIS POINT AND KING BELIEVES SADAT WILL HIMSELF ALSO AGREE TO IT SOON.

13. KING SAID SADAT IS STILL PLAYING GAMES WITH PLO FOR TACTICAL AND PRESTIGE REASONS AND IN ORDER TO CREATE WEDGE BETWEEN JORDAN AND SYRIA. "BUT SADAT DOESN'T TRUST ARAFAT EITHER AND AFTER ALL ARAFAT DOESN'T REALLY LEAD PALESTINIANS ANYWAY". IN REFERRING TO CHAMOUN IDEA OF SENDING POST 1969 PALESTINIANS ARRIVALS OUT OF LEBANON KING JOKINGLY SAID "PLEASE TELL HIM NOT SEND THEM TO JORDAN".

14. I ALSO PROBED FURTHER ON HOW WE MIGHT HELP SARKIS ACHIEVE A SOLUTION BUT KING APPEARED NOT TO HAVE ANY DEFINITE IDEAS ON POINT BEYOND THOSE DESCRIBED ABOVE.

15. AT CONCLUSION KING RAISED KUWAITI MILITARY PROBLEM WITH IRAQ, SAYING THAT KUWAIT SEEMS CURRENTLY TO BE PLAYING IT DOWN, PROBABLY FOR FEAR IRAQIS WOULD CAUSE

AGITATION INTERNALLY IN KUWAIT. HE MENTIONED THAT IRAQI (40-MAN) MILITARY UNIT IS STILL INSIDE JORDANIANS TERRITORY BUT DID NOT APPEAR UNDULY CONCERNED ABOUT IT". KING SAID "THE SOONER WE SETTLE THE LEBANESE PROBLEM THE SOONER IRAQS SECRET

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NEIGHBORS WILL BE IN POSITION TO MAKE IRAQ BEHAVE".

16. KING CONCLUDED INTERVIEW BY SAYING HE WOULD KEEP IN TOUCH REGARDING DEVELOPMENTS ON LEBANESE SITUATION AND SYRIAN EGYPTIAN MINI SUMMIT.

17. COMMENT: MAJOR POINTS TO STRIKE ME IN KINGS POSTURE WERE: (A) HIS SUPPORT FOR SYRIANS ON LEBANESE AND DESIRE TO SEE SYRIAN AND EGYPTIAN UNDERSTANDING AS BREAKTHROUGH ON ISSUE (B) PETULANCE WITH EGYPTIAN ("MANEUVERING") ON LEBANESE PROBLEM BUT OPTIMISM SADAT WILL EVENTUALLY COME TO TERMS WITH SYRIA ON LEBANON: AND (C) DEEP CONVICTION THAT PALESTINIAN MOVEMENT MUST BE RADICALLY RECONSTITUTED BEFORE PEACE ARRIVES IN LEBANON. IT APPEARS KING HAS GIVEN LITTLE THOUGHT TO SPECIFIC WAYS OF STRENGTHENING SARKIS MOVEMENT TOWARDS A SETTLEMENT BEYOND SUPPORTING SYRIAN POSITIONS ON ISSUE. KING WAS OBVIOUSLY PREOCCUPIED WITH EARLIER TELEPHONE CALL FROM ASAD ON MINI SUMMIT ISSUE AND MAY HAVE MORE CONCRETE THOUGHTS FOR US LATER ON GENERAL LEBANESE SITUATION. SUDDARTH

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